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AN ESSAY ON MAN.

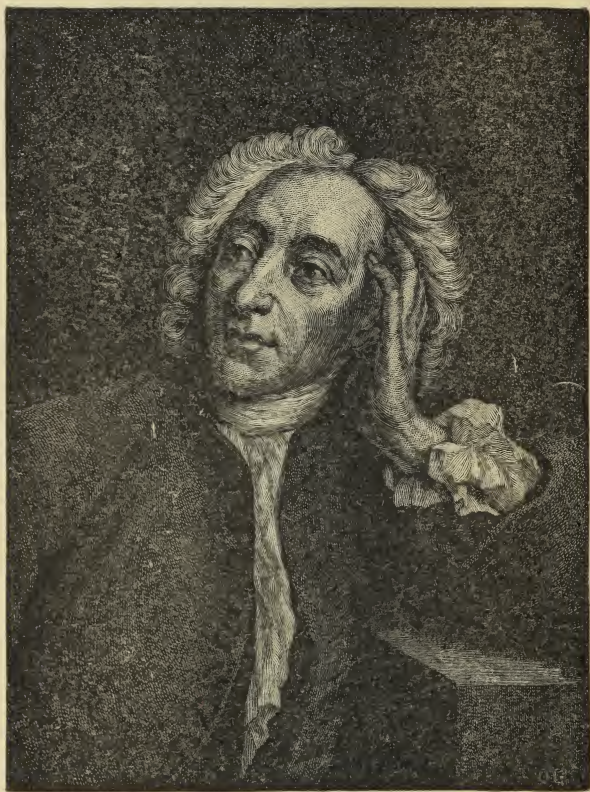
BY

ALEXANDER POPE.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES, INCLUDING
CLARKE'S GRAMMATICAL NOTES.

NEW YORK:

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ALEXANDER POPE

ALEXANDER POPE.

THIS eminent English poet was born in London, May 21, 1688. His parents were Roman Catholics, and to this faith the poet adhered, thus debarring himself from public office and employment. His father, a linen-merchant, having saved a moderate competency, withdrew from business, and settled on a small estate he had purchased in Windsor Forest. He died at Chiswick, in 1717. His son shortly afterwards took a long lease of a house and five acres of land at Twickenham, on the banks of the Thames, whither he retired with his widowed mother, to whom he was tenderly attached, and where he resided till death, cultivating his little domain with exquisite taste and skill, and embellishing it with a grotto, temple, wilderness, and other adjuncts poetical and picturesque. In this famous villa Pope was visited by the most celebrated wits, statesmen, and beauties of the day, himself being the most popular and successful poet of his age. His early years were spent at Binfield, within the range of the Royal Forest. He received some education at little Catholic schools, but was his own instructor after his twelfth year. He never was a profound or accurate scholar, but he read Latin poets with ease and delight, and acquired some Greek, French, and Italian. He was a poet almost from infancy; he "lisp'd in numbers," and when a mere youth surpassed all his contemporaries in metrical harmony and correctness. His pastorals and some translations appeared in 1709; but were written three or four years earlier. These were followed by the *Essay on Criticism*, 1711; *Rape of the Lock* (when completed, the most graceful, airy, and imaginative of his works), 1712-1714; *Windsor Forest*, 1713; *Temple of Fame*, 1715. In a collection of his works printed in 1717 he included the *Epistle of Eloisa* and *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*, two poems inimitable for pathetic beauty and finished melodious versification.

From 1715 till 1726 Pope was chiefly engaged on his translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which, though wanting in true Homeric simplicity, naturalness, and grandeur, are splendid poems. In 1728-29 he published his greatest satire—the *Dunciad*, an attack on all poetasters and pretended wits, and on all other persons against whom the sensitive poet had conceived any enmity. In 1737 he gave to the world a volume of his *Literary Correspondence*, containing some pleasant gossip and observations, with choice passages of description; but it appears that the correspondence was manufactured for publication not composed of actual letters addressed to the parties whose names are given, and the collection was introduced to the public by means of an elaborate stratagem on the part of the scheming poet. Between the years 1731 and 1739 he issued a series of poetical essays, moral and philosophical, with satires and imitations of Horace, all admirable for sense, wit, spirit, and brilliancy. Of these delightful productions, the most celebrated is the *Essay on Man*, to which Bolingbroke is believed to have contributed the spurious philosophy and false sentiment; but its merit consists in detached passages, descriptions, and pictures. A fourth book to the *Dunciad*, containing many beautiful and striking lines, and a general revision of his works, closed the poet's literary cares and toils. He died on the 30th of May, 1744, and was buried in the church at Twickenham.

Pope was of very diminutive stature, and deformed from his birth. His physical infirmity, susceptible temperament, and incessant study rendered his life "one long disease." He was, as his friend Lord Chesterfield said, "the most irritable of all the genus irritable vatum, offended with trifles, and never forgetting or forgiving them." His literary stratagems, disguises, assertions, denials, and (we must add) misrepresentations would fill volumes. Yet when no disturbing jealousy, vanity, or rivalry intervened, was generous and affectionate, and he had a manly, independent spirit. As a poet he was deficient in originality and creative power, and thus was inferior to his prototype, Dryden; but as a literary artist, and brilliant declaimer, satirist, and moralizer in verse, he is still unrivaled. He is the English Horace, and will as surely descend with honors to the latest posterity.

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE question whether Pope was a poet has hardly yet been settled, and is hardly worth settling; for if he was not a great poet he must have been a great prose writer—that is, he was a great writer of some sort. He was a man of exquisite faculties and of the most refined taste; and as he chose verse (the most obvious distinction of poetry) as the vehicle to express his ideas, he has generally passed for a poet, and a good one. If, indeed, by a great poet we mean one who gives the utmost grandeur to our conceptions of nature, or the utmost force to the passions of the heart, Pope was not, in this sense, a great poet; for the best, the characteristic power of his mind lay the clean contrary way—namely, in presenting things as they appear to the indifferent observer, stripped of prejudice and passion. * * *

He was not, then, distinguished as a poet of lofty enthusiasm, of strong imagination, with a passionate sense of the beauties of nature, or a deep insight into the workings of the heart; but he was a wit, a critic, and a man of sense, of observation, and of the world; with a keen relish for the elegancies of art, or of nature when embellished by art; a quick tact for propriety of thought and manners, as established by the forms and customs of society; refined sympathy with the sentiments and habitudes of human life as he felt them within the little circle of his family and friends.

Pope saw nature only dressed by art; he judged of beauty by fashion; he sought for truth in the opinions of the world; he judged of the feelings of others by his own.—THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

POPE is not only the foremost literary figure of his age, but the representative man of a system or style of writing which for a hundred years before and after him pervaded English poetry.

The writers in this style are sometimes spoken of as the "school of Pope." But the title is a misnomer. A school coexists along with other schools from which it is distinguished by some special characteristics; all the contemporaneous schools taken together bearing the common and more general stamp of their age.

During the period which extends, speaking roughly, from the Restoration to the French Revolution, the whole of English literary effort, but especially poetical effort, has one aim and is governed by one principle. This is the desire to attain perfection of form; a sense of the beauty of literary composition as such. It was the rise within the vernacular language of that idea which, impregnating the Latin language as written and spoken in the fifteenth century, had produced the revived, neolatin literature of the Renaissance. Pope himself (Sat. and Ep. 5), in describing this "Manner," spoke of it as French, and attributed it to the imitation of French fashions introduced into England at the Restoration.

"We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms:
Her arts victorious triumph'd o'er our arms;
Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
Wit grew polite, and numbers learn'd to flow."

A better denomination for the period of our literature which extends from the Restoration to the French Revolution is "the classical period." And this is not to be taken to mean that English writers now imitated the Greek and Latin writers, or consciously formed themselves upon classical models, as the Latinists of the Renaissance imitated Cicero and Virgil. English writers had begun to perceive that there was such an art as the art of writing; that it was not enough to put down words upon paper anyhow, provided they conveyed your meaning. They found that sounds were capable of modulation, and that pleasure could be given by the arrangement of words, as well as instruction conveyed by their import. The public ear was touched by this new harmony, and began imperatively to demand its satisfaction; and from that moment the rude volubility of the older time seemed to it as the gabble of savages. <A poem was no longer to be a story told with picturesque imagery, but was to be a composition in symmetry and keeping.> A thought or a feeling was not to be blurted out in the first words that came, but was to be matured by reflection and reduced to its simplest expression. Condensation,

terseness, neatness, finish—all qualities hitherto unheard of in English—had to be studied. It was found to be possible to please by your manner as well as by your matter. And having been shown to be possible, it became necessary. * * *

Pope at once took the lead in the race of writers because he took more pains than they. He labored day and night to form himself for his purpose, that of becoming a writer of finished verse.

To improve his mind, to enlarge his view of the world, to store up knowledge—these were things unknown to him. Any ideas, any thoughts, such as custom, chance, society, or sect may suggest, are good enough, but each idea must be turned over till it has been reduced to its neatest and most epigrammatic expression.

Pope, wherever he recedes from what was immediately close to him, the manners, passions, prejudices, sentiments, of his own day, has only such merit—little enough—which wit divorced from truth can have. He is at his best only where the delicacies and subtle felicities of his diction are employed to embody some transient phase of feeling. * * *

The Essay on Man is a didactic or argumentative poem, not on man, as the title bears, but a théodicée or vindication of the ways of Providence. The view attempted to be presented is that of Leibnitzian optimism; the end of the universe is the general good of the whole; it was impossible to realize this without admitting partial evil. Man is not the end of creation, but only one in a graduated scale of beings; it is his pride which leads him to complain when he finds that everything has not been ordered for his benefit. The reasoning of the Essay on Man is feeble, the philosophy either trite or inconsistent, or obscure. But the less the intrinsic value of the argument, the more is our admiration excited by the literary skill and brilliant execution displayed in the management. The particular illustrations, the episodes and side-lights, always sparkle with wit, and are sometimes warm with feeling, when the main thesis is jejune and frigid.—*Rev. MARK PATTISON in Ward's "English Poets."*

THE DESIGN.

Prefixed in 1735, when Pope inserted the Essay on Man in his works.

HAVING proposed to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as, to use my Lord Bacon's expression, come home to men's business and bosoms, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering man in the abstract, his nature and his state; since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of human nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points. There are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind as in that of the body, more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and, I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a temperate, yet not inconsistent, and a short, yet not imperfect, system of ethics. ✍

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards. The other may seem odd, but is true. I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is

more certain, than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious; or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these, without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published is only to be considered as a general map of man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connection, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently, these Epistles, in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will be less dry, and more susceptible of poetical ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the passage. To deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, may be a task more agreeable.

AN ESSAY ON MAN,

IN FOUR EPISTLES

TO

HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE.

Written in the Year 1732.

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE I.

OF MAN IN THE ABSTRACT.

I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, verse 17, etc. II. That man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, verse 35, etc. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, verse 77, etc. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice of His dispensations, verse 113, etc. V. The absurdity of conceiving himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural, verse 131, etc. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while on the one hand he demands the perfections of the angels, and on the other the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though, to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree would render him miserable, verse 173, etc. VII. That throughout the whole visible world, a universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gradations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; that reason alone countervails all the other faculties, verse 207, etc. VIII. How much farther this order and subordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation, must be destroyed, verse 233, etc. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, verse 259, etc. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, verse 281, etc., to the end.

EPISTLE I.

AWAKE, my St. John ! leave all meaner things

To low ambition and the pride of kings.

Let us, since life can little more supply

Than just to look about us and to die,

Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man;

- A mighty maze ! but not without a plan;

- A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot; •

- Or garden tempting with forbidden fruit. •

Together let us beat this ample field, •

* Try what the open, what the covert yield;

The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore,

Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;

1. **St. John.**—Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, was a Secretary of State in the reign of Queen Anne. On the accession of George I. he fled to France, to avoid a threatened impeachment. Being pardoned in 1723, he returned to England, where he enjoyed the society of Pope, Swift, and other of his old friends. In 1735 he again retired to France for seven years. The matter of Bolingbroke's works is of little value, owing to the unsoundness of his principles both in religion and in philosophy, but his style is singularly eloquent and highly polished.

4. *Than* and *as* are sometimes followed by verbs in the infinitive mode which are used in a potential sense: thus since life can little more supply, than that we *may look*, etc. Sometimes, also, a verb in the infinitive mode stands as the object, on which an action terminates, like a noun in the objective case; so, *to look*, may be connected with the substantive phrase, *little more*, by the conjunction *than*.

5. This exordium relates to the whole work, first in general, then in particular. The 6th, 7th, and 8th lines allude to the subjects of this book,—the general order and design of Providence; the constitution of the human mind, whose passions cultivated are virtues, neglected vices; the temptations of misapplied self-love, and wrong pursuits of power, pleasure, and false happiness.—POPE.

In the foregoing note the expression "this book" means the four published epistles of the Essay, which were intended to form the first book of "the whole work," which was not completed.

6. The 6th verse alludes to the subject of this first Epistle,—the state of man here and hereafter, disposed by Providence, though to him unknown.—POPE.

7. Alludes to the subject of the second Epistle,—the passions, their good or evil.—POPE.

8. Alludes to the subject of the fourth Epistle,—of man's various pursuits of happiness or pleasure.—POPE.

10. The 10th, 13th, and 14th verses allude to the subject of the second Epistle of the second book,—the characters of men and manners.—POPE.

Open and *covert* are adjectives supplying the place of their nouns (perhaps *parts*) understood; a usage common in poetry.

Pope's four Moral Essays were a portion of the proposed second book.

11. The 11th and 12th verses allude to the subject of the first Epistle of the second book—the limits of reason, learning, and ignorance.—POPE.

This Epistle was not written.

Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies, \\
 And catch the manners living as they rise; \\
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can; 15
 But vindicate the ways of God to man. ✓

I. Say first, of God above or man below,
 What can we reason but from what we know ?
 Of man, what see we but his station here,
 From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
 Through worlds unnumbered though the God be known,
 'Tis ours to trace Him only in our own.
 He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
 See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
 Observe how system into system runs, 25
 What other planets circle other suns,
 What varied being peoples every star,
 May tell why Heaven has made us as we are.
 But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
 The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 Looked through, or can a part contain the whole ?

Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
 And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee ?

II. Presumptuous man ! the reason wouldst thou find, 35
 Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind ?

15. **Candid.**—Lenient and favorable in judgment.

16. Alludes to the subject which runs through the whole design—the justification of the methods of Providence.—POPE.

“And justify the ways of God to man.”—MILTON, *Par. Lost*, i. 26.

18. *From* what can we reason, etc.

21. Though the God be known through worlds, etc. A preposition always shows relation between the word which it governs and some other—a verb, noun, or an adjective.

23-28. He, who can *pierce*, *see*, and *observe*, may tell, etc. When a nominative case is immediately followed by a relative, you must look for its verb beyond the relative sentence and its connections.

29-32. Has thy pervading soul looked through the bearings, ties, etc., of this frame ?

29. **This frame.**—The universe as an arranged system.

33. **The great chain.**—An allusion to the golden chain of Homer, which the poet represents as sustained by Jove, with the whole creation appended to it.

First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
 Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less?
 Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
 Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade! 40
 Or ask of yonder argent fields above
 Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove!

Of systems possible, if 'tis confessed
 That wisdom infinite must form the best,
 Where all must full or not coherent be, 45
 And all that rises rise in due degree,
 Then, in the scale of reasoning life, 'tis plain
 There must be somewhere such a rank as man:
 And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)

Is only this, if God has placed him wrong. 50

Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
 May, must be right, as relative to all.
 In human works, though labored on with pain,
 A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
 In God's, one single can its end produce; 55
 Yet serves to second too some other use.
 So man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why man restrains

37. If thou canst *guess*, then *guess* the harder reason. *Guess* in the end of the line is in the imperative mode.

40. Then the *weeds*, which they shade, *are made*.

42. Why Jupiter's *moons* or *satellites*, are less than the planet itself?

Satellites.—In four syllables, the pronunciation of the time.

43. If 'tis confest, that infinite Wisdom must form the best of possible systems.

45. Where all must fall, or not be coherent.

49. *Wrangle* may be, by hypothesis, put in the imperative or in the subjunctive mode—if *we* or *you* wrangle.

50. The phrase, *if God has placed him wrong*, is in apposition with *question*.

51. *Respecting*, by some, is called a preposition and it may be a part.—That, respecting man, which we call wrong.

55. **Single.**—That is, single movement.

His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
 When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
 Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god;
 Then shall man's pride and dullness comprehend 65
 His actions', passions', being's, use and end
 Why doing, suff'ring, checked, impelled; and why
 This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not man's imperfect, Heaven in fault;
 Say rather man's as perfect as he ought: 70
 His knowledge measured to his state and place,
 His time a moment, and a point his space.
 If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
 What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
 The blest to-day is as completely so, 75
 As who began a thousand years ago.

. III. Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,
 All but the page prescribed, their present state;
 From brutes what men, from men what spirits know;
 Or who could suffer being here below? 80
 The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
 Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
 Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
 And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.

63. Oxen were offered in sacrifice by most of the ancients, as well as by the Jews. With the Egyptians, the species *ox* was sacred, and an object of worship. When their god, *the bull Apis*, died, in the reign of Ptolemy Augustus, the expenses of his funeral pomp exceeded 50,000 French crowns.

64. **Egypt's god.**—*Apis*, the bull kept at Memphis, and worshiped by the Egyptians.

70. **As he ought.**—That is, as he ought to be.

75. **Blest**, a participle used for its substantive, or, the man who *is* (or who *egan to be*) *blest to-day*, etc.

76. **Years**—Nouns of *time* and *distance*, and *manner*, with the noun, *home*, are put in the objective case, without any word expressed to govern them—a preposition being understood.

80. See this pursued in Epistle III., verse 66, etc., verse 79, etc.—POPE.

Being is a noun—Who could suffer (i.e., bear the burden of) *existence* here below

81. **Riot.**—Luxury, excess.

If the *lamb*, which thy riot dooms, etc. (if *he*) had thy reason, would he skip and play? *He* is only a repetition of the subject, and in apposition with *lamb*.

Oh blindness to the future ! kindly given, 85
 That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven:
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world. 90

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
 Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.
 What future bliss He gives not thee to know,
 But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
 Hope springs eternal in the human breast; 95
 Man never is, but always to be, blest.
 The soul, uneasy, and confined from home,
 Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind •
 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind; 100
 His soul proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk or milky way;
 Yet simple Nature to his hope has given,
 Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven;
 Some safer world in depth of woods embraced, 105
 Some happier island in the watery waste.
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
 To be, contents his natural desire;

85. Interjections govern both the nominative and objective of pronouns but the nominative only of nouns.

87. *Who* relates to *Heaven*, which is here used for God, and God, in the end of the line, is connected with *who*, by the conjunction *as*—or, those nouns which follow the conjunction *as*, and have a like meaning with those to which they are connected, may be considered in apposition with the same.

88. Matthew x. 29.

92. *Wait for* the great teacher. By a particular usage of language, the objective case is put after many verbs which do not pass over to them, at the real objects of an action.

93. **What future bliss.**—That is, what future bliss shall be.

94. Further opened in, Epistle II., verse 283; Epistle III., verse 74; Epistle IV., verse 346. etc.—POPE.

102. The ancient opinion that the souls of the just went thither.—POPE.
 To the solar walk, that is, the circuit of the sun.

He asks no angel's wings, no seraph's fire; 110
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense,
 Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
 Call imperfection what thou fanciest such, 115
 Say, Here He gives too little, there too much!
 Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
 Yet cry, If man's unhappy, God's unjust;
 If man alone engross not Heaven's high care,
 Alone made perfect here, immortal there: 120
 Snatch from His hand the balance and the rod,
 Re-judge His justice, be the god of God.

In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
 All quit their sphere and rush into the skies!
 Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes, 125
 Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
 Aspiring to be gods if angels fell,
 Aspiring to be angels men rebel:
 And who but wishes to invert the laws
 Of order, sins against the Eternal Cause. 130

V. Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
 Earth for whose use, Pride answers, "'Tis for mine!
 For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,
 Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;
 Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew 135
 The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;

112. So in Homer, at the funeral of Patroclus, xxiii. 12, of our poet's translation:

"Of nine large dogs, domestic at his board,
 Fall two, selected to attend their lord."—WAKEFIELD.

113. **Sense**.—Here used for "the senses."

Go, thou, who art wiser than the *poor Indian*.

115. Call *that*, imperfection, *which* thou fanciest to be such.

117. **Gust**.—Gratification of the palate, relish—opposed to *disgust*.

120. If *he be* not alone *made*, etc., then *snatch*.

121. **Balance**.—Of justice, in which qualities are weighed.—**Rod**, the rod of chastisement for offenses.

129. *He* who, etc., *sins*. When *but* can be changed into *only*, without injuring the sense, it is an adverb.

For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
 For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
 Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
 My footstool earth, my canopy the skies!" 140

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?

"No," 'tis replied, "the first Almighty Cause
 Acts not by partial but by general laws: 145

The exceptions few; some change since all began;
 And what created perfect?"—Why then man?
 If the great end be human happiness,
 Then Nature deviates; and can man do less? 150

As much that end a constant course requires
 Of showers and sunshine, as of man's desires:
 As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
 As men forever temperate, calm, and wise.

If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design, 155
 Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?

140. Isaiah lxvi. 1: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." It has been said no sane man could ever pretend that "earth was his footstool," and Pope alone is responsible for the unbecoming misapplication of the prophet's language.

141. But does not nature err from this gracious end, viz.: *the blessings enumerated above.*

147. **Some change.**—That is, *There has been some change.*

150. **Then Nature deviates.**—If the great end of terrestrial creation is allowed to be human happiness, then it is clear that Nature sometimes deviates from that end, as in the instance of plagues and earthquakes.

151-153. That end as much *requires* eternal springs, etc., *as it requires* that men should be forever temperate, etc.

156. **Borgia.**—Cæsar Borgia, a natural son of Pope Alexander VI. He was one of the greatest monsters of a time of depravity, when the court of Rome was the scene of all the worst forms of crime. Early made a cardinal, he, through envy, caused his brother to be assassinated. Having undertaken for the Holy See the conquest of the Romagna, he murdered the rightful lords of that country, notwithstanding that their lives had been guaranteed by his oath. He afterwards prepared poison for twelve cardinals. The poisoned wine was by mistake drunk by both the pope and himself. The pope died, but he recovered. Cæsar was ultimately killed in battle in 1507.

Catiline.—Lucius Sergius Catilina, born about 108 B.C., the author of a conspiracy or political revolution in Rome, which has made his name infamous to all ages. The history of it has been written by Sallust. Catiline was slain in battle, B.C. 62.

Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,
 Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms,
 Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
 Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind? 160
 From pride, from pride our very reasoning springs;
 Account for moral, as for natural things:
 Why charge we Heaven in those, in these acquit?
 In both to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165
 Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
 That never air or ocean felt the wind;
 That never passion discomposed the mind.
 But all subsists by elemental strife;
 And passions are the elements of life. 170
 The general order, since the whole began,
 Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

VI. What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
 And little less than angel, would be more!
 Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears 175
 To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
 Made for his use, all creatures if he call,
 Say what their use, had he the powers of all:
 Nature to these without profusion kind,
 The proper organs, proper powers assigned; 180

158. Who knows but *he*, whose hand, etc., *pours*?

159. Julius Cæsar is here meant.

160. **Young Ammon.**—Alexander the Great, of Macedon, who visited the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Africa, and was styled by the priests son of their god.

166. If all were *harmony* there (i.e., in the operations of nature), and all *virtue* here (i.e., in the actions of men).

170. See this subject extended in Epistle II. from verse 100 to 122; verse 165, etc.—POPE.

173. What would this man *do* or *have*; or what wishes this man. When the interrogative is not directly the nominative to the verb, there being no other nominative case, it is either the nominative after the verb, governed by it, or by a preposition expressed or understood.

174. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor."—Psalm viii. 5.

179–181. *Nature*, being *kind* without profusion, assigned the proper organs, etc., and *compensated* each seeming want.

Each seeming want compensated of course,
 Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force:
 All in exact proportion to the state;
 Nothing to add, and nothing to abate:
 Each beast, each insect happy in its own: 185
Is Heaven unkind to man, and man alone?
 Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
 Be pleased with nothing, if not blessed with all?
 The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find),
 Is not to act or think beyond mankind; 190
 No powers of body or of soul to share,
 But what his nature and his state can bear.
 Why has not man a microscopic eye?
 For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
 Say what the use, were finer optics given, 195
 To inspect a mite, not comprehend the heaven?
 Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart and agonize at every pore?
 Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
 Die of a rose in aromatic pain? 200
 If Nature thundered in his opening ears,

182. It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of creatures, that in proportion as they are formed for strength, their swiftness is lessened; or as they are formed for swiftness, their strength is abated.—POPE.

184. *To add* and *to abate* seem to imply a passive signification—Nothing to be added and nothing to be abated.

See Epistle III., verse 79, etc., and verse 109, etc.—POPE.

185. *In its own*.—Supply “condition.”

190. *Not to act or think beyond mankind* is a substantive phrase used as a nominative after *is*, and *to share no powers* is connected with it.

193–204. These lines have very often been misunderstood, and turned out of their true meaning. The poet adverts to the five senses, in order; asking first, Why man has not a microscopic eye, i.e., an eye formed to see the smallest objects, as are those of flies? and then answers, because man is not a fly. On the principle of optics, if we could see much more minutely, we could not take in so large a space of the heavens at one view; as a fly cannot see the whole of one side of a building upon which he may light. What would be the use, if finer touch were given, if this keener sensation *cause* or *make us smart* and agonize at every pore? Smell is supposed to be occasioned by some effluvia passing through the brain; and what the use, were this sense so quick, or the effect of these passing effluvia so powerful, as to make us die of the smell of a rose in aromatic pain?

201. It is justly objected that the argument required an instance drawn from real sound, and not from the imaginary music of the spheres. Locke's

And stunned him with the music of the spheres,
 How would he wish that Heaven had left him still
 The whispering zephyr and the purling rill !
 Who finds not Providence all good and wise, 205
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies ?

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
 The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends.
 Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
 From the green myriads in the peopled grass; 210
 What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
 The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
 Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
 And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
 Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood, 215
 To that which warbles through the vernal wood !
 The spider's touch how exquisitely fine !
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
 In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
 From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew ? 220
 How instinct varies in the groveling swine,
 Compared, half-reasoning elephant, with thine !
 'Twixt that and reason, what a nice barrier !
 Forever separate, yet for ever near !

illustration of this doctrine is not only proper but poetical. "If our sense of hearing were but one thousand times quicker than it is, how would a perpetual noise distract us; and we should, in the quietest retirement, be less able to sleep or meditate than in the middle of a sea-fight."

202. **Music of the spheres.**—An ancient fancy that the rotation of the planets was accompanied with sound, each planet giving a note higher than that next it.

211. *How many modes or degrees of sight are there between the dimness of the mole's, and the sharpness of the lynx's? What may be made a relative or demonstrative pronoun.*

213. The lion is said to be defective in the sense of smell, so much so as not to pursue his prey by scent, as do the hounds.

215. The life that fills the flood—*fishes*, which are in a degree destitute of hearing.

217. *It* (i.e., the spider's touch) feels.

219. **Nice.**—Distinguishing accurately.

222. The elephant is here addressed, and called *half reasoning*, on account of his superior sagacity, compared with other animals.

223. **Barrier.**—Now accented on the first syllable.

'Twixt *that* and *reason*, i.e., 'twixt the *instinct* of the elephant and *reason*.

Remembrance and reflection, how allied; 225
 What thin partitions sense from thought divide;
 And middle natures, how they long to join,
 Yet never pass the insuperable line!
 Without this just gradation, could they be
 Subjected, these to those, or all to thee? 230
 The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
 Is not thy reason all these powers in one?
 VIII. See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
 All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
 Above, how high progressive life may go! 235
 Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
 Vast chain of being! which from God began,
 Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
 Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
 No glass can reach; from infinite to thee, 240
 From thee to nothing. λ On superior powers
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:
 From Nature's chain whatever link you strike, 245
 Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
 And if each system in gradation roll
 Alike essential to the amazing whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall. 250
 Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
 Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;

226. **Thought.**—Reasoning, as opposed to seeing, feeling, etc., implied in the word *sense* used in the verse.

237. Vast chain of being! comprehending natures ethereal, etc. In exclamatory sentences, like this, the noun, as *chain*, seems to be a nominative independent, in a different sense from that where an address is made; but we have no established rule for it and therefore must understand a verb.

239. What *that which* no glass can reach, viz., animalcules, which cannot be discovered even by the best magnifiers; *extending* from infinite to thee. *Extending* agrees with *which*, after *being*, in line 237.

252. The construction here is: Let planets and suns run lawless through

Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,
 Being on being wrecked, and world on world;
 Heaven's whole foundations to their center nod, 255
 And Nature tremble to the throne of God!

All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
 Vile worm!—Oh! madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,
 Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head? 260

What if the head, the eye, or ear repined
 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
 Just as absurd for any part to claim
 To be another in this general frame;
 Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains 265
 The great directing Mind of all ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
 That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
 Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame, 270

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part, 275

As full, as perfect in a hair as heart;
 As full, as perfect in vile man that mourns,
 As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:

the sky, let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled, let being be wrecked on being, and let world be wrecked on world, let heaven's whole foundations nod to their center, and let Nature tremble to the throne of God.

259. *What*—see note to verse 173.

262. *Engines* is in the nominative case after to *serve*.

266. See the prosecution and application of this in Epistle IV., verse 162.—
 POPE.

269. *That*—a relative pronoun referring to *soul* for its antecedent, and in the nominative case to *warms*.

276. *Which* is as full. A hair may be considered as the most insignificant, and the heart as the noblest, part of mortal man. The idea was probably suggested by this passage of Scripture: Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice, and the hairs of our head are all numbered.

To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

X. Cease then, nor Order imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.
Submit: in this or any other sphere, 285
Secure to be as blessed as thou canst bear;
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see; 290
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE II.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO HIMSELF, AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

I. The business of man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature: his powers and frailties, verse 1 to 19. The limits of his capacity, verse 19, etc. II. The two principles of man, self-love and reason, both necessary, verse 53, etc. Self-love the stronger, and why, verse 67, etc. Their end the same, verse 81, etc. III. The passions, and their use, verses 93 to 130. The predominant passion, and its force, 132 to 160. Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes, verse 165, etc. Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue, verse 177. IV. Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature; the limits near, yet the things separate and evident: what is the office of reason, verses 202 to 216. V. How odious vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, verse 217. VI. That, however, the ends of Providence and general good are answered in our passions and imperfections, verse 233, etc. How usefully these are distributed to all orders of men, verse 241. How useful they are to society, verse 251. And to individuals, verse 263. In every state, and every age of life, verse 273, etc.

EPISTLE II.

I. KNOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,
 The proper study of mankind is man.
 Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
 A being darkly wise and rudely great:
 With too much knowledge for the skeptic side, 5
 With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
 He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
 In doubt to deem himself a god or beast;
 In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
 Born but to die, and reasoning but to err; 10
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little or too much;
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
 Still by himself abused, or disabused;
 Created half to rise, and half to fall; 15
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled;
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!
 Go, wondrous creature! mount where science guides,
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,

1. **Know thyself** was the favorite maxim of the ancients. It is here, perhaps, more confined in its meaning. Know thy weakness, presume not God to scan: for "who by searching can find out God?"

5. The *skeptic* is one who professes to doubt all things.

6. The *stoic* pretends that our happiness should not in the least be affected by our outward circumstances.

7. **In doubt to act, or rest.**—Johnson, in his translation of Crousaz, says he cannot determine whether any one has discovered the true meaning of these words. The language is vague, and incapable of an interpretation which is generally true; but the probable sense seems to be that man is in doubt whether to embrace an active belief, or whether to resign himself to a passive, inert skepticism.

10. Man is the only terrestrial being capable of reasoning, or of deducing remoter truths from those which are known and admitted; yet, by assuming false premises, or by improperly linking his ideas, he too frequently stumbles upon false conclusions. *But*, i.e. only, to err.

11. The construction is, "Such is the reason of man that he is equally ignorant whether he thinks too little or too much."

14. **Abused.**—Deceived.

21. Instruct the planets *as* to the orbs in which they should run; or to point out to the planets the orbs in which they should run.

Correct old time, and regulate the sun;
 Go, soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;
 Or tread the mazy round his followers trod,
 And quitting sense call imitating God;
 As Eastern priests in giddy circles run,
 And turn their heads to imitate the sun.

25

Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—

Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!

30

Superior beings, when of late they saw
 A mortal man unfold all Nature's law,
 Admired such wisdom in an earthly shape,
 And showed a Newton, as we show an ape.

Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind,
 Describe or fix one movement of his mind?

35

Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
 Explain his own beginning or his end?

22. **Correct old time.**—Warburton says that this refers to Sir Isaac Newton's chronology. More probably Pope alluded to the Gregorian reformation of the calendar, adopted throughout the greater part of Europe towards the close of the sixteenth century, though not in England till 1752.

—**Regulate the sun.**—Is said by Wakefield to refer to the use of equal mean for unequal apparent time.

23. **Empyreal.**—Formed of fire, from Gr. *empyros*, in fire, from *em*, in, and *pyr*, fire.

Empyreal sphere.—The seventh of the seven fictitious spheres of the ancients, "inhabited," says Cicero, "by that all-powerful God who controls the other spheres."

24. **First.**—From which all others are derived.

Fair.—Free from blemish, pure, beautiful.

26. Call *quitting sense, imitating God*. These are substantive phrases, the latter in apposition with the former.

27, 28. A reference to the sacred dance of the Mohammedan monks. Plutarch tells us, in his *Life of Numa*, that the followers of Pythagoras were enjoined to turn themselves round during the performance of their religious worship; and that this circumrotation was intended to imitate the revolution of the world.

34. And showed a Newton, etc.; i.e., with the same admiration of his superiority over his kind, in imitating *them*, which we feel, on seeing a brute animal capable of showing, by his actions, so striking a resemblance to the human species.

Newton.—Sir Isaac Newton, the most remarkable mathematician and natural philosopher of his own or perhaps of any other age, born at Woolsthorpe, in Lincolnshire, in 1642. His theory of gravitation, perhaps the greatest scientific discovery ever made, is unfolded in his great work *The Principia*. He died in 1727.

35-38. Could he (Newton), after all his mighty discoveries, describe or fix one movement of his *own* mind. Could he explain his own beginning, or his end?

Alas! what wonder! Man's superior part
 Unchecked may rise, and climb from art to art; 40
 But when his own great work is but begun,
 What reason weaves, by passion is undone.

Trace science, then, with modesty thy guide;
 First strip off all her equipage of pride;
 Deduct what is but vanity, or dress, 45
 Or learning's luxury, or idleness,
 Or tricks to show the stretch of human brain,
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain;
 Expunge the whole, or lop the excrescent parts
 Of all our vices have created arts; 50
 Then see how little the remaining sum,
 Which served the past, and must the times to come!

II. Two principles in human nature reign;
 Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain;
 Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call, 55
 Each works its end to move or govern all:
 And to their proper operation still
 Ascribe all good; to their improper, ill.

Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole. 60
 Man, but for that, no action could attend,
 And, but for this, were active to no end:
 Fixed like a plant on his peculiar spot,
 To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;

42. An allusion to the web of Penelope in Homer's *Odyssey*.

44. **Pride.**—Ornament, splendor.

50. Of all, which our vices have created or *formed* into arts.

Arts.—Metaphysics, logic, rhetoric, etc.

52. Which served the past, and must *serve* the times *which are* to come.

55. Nor do we call *this (reason)* a good principle; nor that (*self-love*) a bad principle.

56. Each works its end, *which is*, etc.; or the sub-phrase, *to move or govern all*, may be in apposition with *end*.

58. To their *improper* operation ascribe all *ill*.

Ascribe.—Supply *we* before it.

59. **Acts.**—In the obsolete sense of *moves to action*.

62. *Were active*—an elegant poetical usage for *would be active*.

Or, meteor-like, flame lawless through the void, 65
 Destroying others, by himself destroyed.

Most strength the moving principle requires;
 Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires;
 Sedate and quiet, the comparing lies,
 Formed but to check, deliberate, and advise. 70

Self-love still stronger, as its objects nigh;
 Reason's at distance and in prospect lie:
 That sees immediate good by present sense;
 Reason, the future and the consequence.

Thicker than arguments, temptations throng, 75
 At best more watchful this, but that more strong.
 The action of the stronger to suspend,
 Reason still use, to reason still attend.

Attention, habit and experience gains;
 Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains. 80

Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,
 More studious to divide than to unite;
 And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,
 With all the rash dexterity of wit.

Wits, just like fools, at war about a name, 85
 Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.

Self-love and reason to one end aspire,
Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire;
 But greedy that, its object would devour,

67-69. It should be kept in mind that in all the following part of this work, the poet treats of *self-love* as the *moving*, and *reason* as the *comparing* principle.

72. Reason's *objects* are at a distance.

74. Reason *sees* the future, etc.

79. *Attention gains* habit and experience.

81. **Schoolmen.**—These were the philosophers and divines of the Middle Ages. but the name may here be used of moralists generally.

These friends.—Reason and self-love.

82. "If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are '*cumini sectores*' ['dividers of cummin seed,' 'straw-splitters'].—BACON, *Essay "Of Studies."*"

83. **Sense.**—The five senses. When used in a moral sense, it is equivalent to Pope's expression "self-love."

Split.—Separate, part.

Let them point out nice distinctions between grace and virtue, etc.

This taste the honey, and not wound the flower: 90
 (Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
 Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

III. Modes of self-love the passions we may call;
 'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all:
 But since not every good we can divide, 95
 And Reason bids us for our own provide,
 Passions, though selfish, if their means be fair,
 List under Reason, and deserve her care;
 Those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,
 Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name. 100

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast
 Their virtue fixed: 'tis fixed as in a frost;
 Contracted all, retiring to the breast;
 But strength of mind is exercise, not rest:
 The rising tempest puts in act the soul, 105
 Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.
 On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,
 Reason the card, but passion is the gale;
 Nor God alone in the still calm we find,
 He mounts the storms, and walks upon the wind. 110

Passions, like elements, though born to fight,
 Yet, mixed and softened, in His work unite:
 These 'tis enough to temper and employ;
 But what composes man, can man destroy?

98. **List.**—Enlist.

We call the *passions* modes of self-love.

99. **Those, that imparted.**—The passions that have reason imparted to them.

101. The Stoics, in their character of their virtuous man, included rational desire, aversion, and exultation; included love and parental affection; friendship and a general charity, or benevolence to all mankind; that they considered it as a duty, arising from our very nature, not to neglect the welfare of public society, but to be ever ready, according to our rank, to act either the magistrate or the private citizen; that their apathy was no more than a freedom from perturbation, from irrational and excessive agitations of the soul; and consequently, that the strange apathy commonly laid to their charge, and in the demolishing of which there have been so many triumphs, was an imaginary apathy, for which they were no way accountable.

108. **The card.**—The paper in the mariner's compass on which the points of the compass are marked.

114. Can man destroy *that, which* composes man?

Suffice that Reason keep to Nature's road, 115
 Subject, compound them, follow her and God.

Love, hope, and joy, fair Pleasure's smiling train,
 Hate, fear, and grief, the family of Pain,
 These, mixed with art, and to due bounds confined,
 Make and maintain the balance of the mind: 120
 The lights and shades, whose well-accorded strife
 Gives all the strength and color of our life.

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes;
 And when in act they cease, in prospect rise:
 Present to grasp, and future still to find, 125
 The whole employ of body and of mind.

All spread their charms, but charm not all alike;
 On different senses different objects strike;
 Hence different passions more or less inflame,
 As strong or weak the organs of the frame; 130
 And hence one master-passion in the breast,
 Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
 Receives the lurking principle of death;
 The young disease, that must subdue at length, 135
 Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength:
 So, cast and mingled with his very frame,
 The mind's disease, its ruling passion, came;
 Each vital humor which should feed the whole,
 Soon flows to this, in body and in soul: 140
 Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
 As the mind opens, and its functions spread,

115. Let it suffice that reason *keep*. The verb is here put in the subjunctive mood after *that*.

121. These are the lights and shades—or, these make the lights and shades.

125. *To grasp* present pleasures, and to find future pleasures, are the whole employ-ment of body and of mind.

131. One master passion, etc. This idea we believe is first to be found in the writings of Longinus, the celebrated critic of other times, who attests the sublimity of the Scriptures, in the passage, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light."

138. The mind's disease came *to be*, i.e., became, etc.

Imagination plies her dangerous art, → faulty
 And pours it all upon the peccant part.
 Nature its mother, habit is its nurse; 145
 Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse;
 Reason itself but gives it edge and power;
 As Heaven's bless'd beam turns vinegar more sour.
 We, wretched subjects, though to lawful sway,
 In this weak queen some favorite still obey; 150
 Ah! if she lend not arms as well as rules,
 What can she more than tell us we are fools?
 Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend;
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend!
 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade 155
 The choice we make, or justify it made;
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,
 She but removes weak passions for the strong.
 So, when small humors gather to a gout,
 The doctor fancies he has driven them out. 160
 Yes, Nature's road must ever be preferred;
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard;
 'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe:
 A mightier power the strong direction sends, 165
 And several men impels to several ends:
 Like varying winds by other passions tossed,
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.
 Let power or knowledge, gold or glory, please;
 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease; 170

150. **Weak queen.**—Reason.

152. What can she *do*, or what can she *tell us*, etc.

153. *She (reason) can* teach us, etc.

163. *To rectify*, not overthrow, is her part. The infinitive is frequently put after the verb *is*, of which it is the subject, and whose representative is the pronoun *it*.

165. The strong direction—*self-love*.

170. *Strong* is an adjective agreeing with *love*, unless we understand the compound relative *what*. An adjective or participle, or relative, included in a parenthesis, may agree with its noun, or antecedent out of the same,

Through life 'tis followed, even at life's expense;
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
 All, all alike find Reason on their side.

The Eternal Art, educing good from ill, 175
 Grafts on this passion our best principle:
 'Tis thus the mercury of man is fixed,
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mixed;
 The dross cements what else were too refined,
 And in one interest body acts with mind. 180

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
 On savage stocks inserted, learn to bear,
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
 Wild Nature's vigor working at the root.

What crops of wit and honesty appear 185
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;

Even avarice, prudence; sloth, philosophy;
 Lust, through some certain strainers well refined,
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind; 190
 Envy, to which the ignoble mind's a slave,
 Is emulation in the learned or brave;
 Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,
 But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

Thus Nature gives us (let it check our pride) 195

and the contrary, but there can be no agreement or government of nouns and verbs in the like situation.

171. Through life *it* is followed, etc., i.e., the *thing*, whatever it be, that pleases more than other *things*.

172. The merchant's *toil*, the sage's *indolence*, all find reason, etc.

177. The mercury of man—the temperament of the mind.

179. The dross cements *that which* otherwise would be, etc.

184. Wild nature's *vigor working*, etc. A substantive and participle are put absolute, in the nominative, when the case depends on no other word.

185. *What* is often used as a demonstrative pronoun, signifying *how many*, or *how great*.

193. *Male and female* are adjectives agreeing with *virtue*.

195. Thus nature gives us (—) the virtue, etc. Some have allowed an active verb to govern two objective cases, one of the person, and the other of the thing; but a preposition may always be understood to govern the person.

The virtue nearest to our vice allied;
 Reason the bias turns to good from ill,
 And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.
 The fiery soul abhorred in Catiline,
 In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine: 200
 The same ambition can destroy or save,
 And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

IV. This light and darkness in our chaos joined,
 What shall divide? The God within the mind.

Extremes in nature equal ends produce, 205
 In man they join to some mysterious use;
 Though each by turns the other's bound invade,
 As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,
 And oft so mix, the difference is too nice
 Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice. 210

Fools! who from hence into the notion fall,
 That vice or virtue there is none at all.
 If white and black blend, soften, and unite
 A thousand ways, is there no black or white?
 Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain; 215
 'Tis to mistake them costs the time and pain.

197. *Reason turns the bias, etc.*

198. Titus is the nominative case after *reigns*.

199. **Catiline.**—See note on Epistle I., 156.

200. **Decius.**—In a war against the neighboring states, the Roman army under the consuls Titus Manlius Torquatus and Decius Mus, entered Campania. A decisive battle was fought near Mount Vesuvius. The Roman augurs having declared, before the battle, that the victory would belong to the army which should lose one of its generals, it was agreed between the consuls that, as soon as either wing should begin to give way, the consul who commanded that wing should devote himself for his country. The wing commanded by Decius having first given way, he executed his vow. Rushing into the midst of the enemy, he fell covered with wounds.

Curtius, Mettus or Metius.—A noble Roman youth who (according to tradition) heroically sacrificed his life for the welfare of his country, 362 B.C. A chasm, it is said, had opened in the forum or market-place in Rome, and the soothsayers predicted that some great calamity would happen if there were not thrown into the chasm the best wealth of the state. While it was proposed to consult the oracles, and determine what this best wealth could be, Curtius appeared on horse-back and in full armor, and exclaimed—“Rome has no greater riches than courage and arms.” He then rode over the precipice into the chasm, which immediately closed over him.

204. The God within the mind *shall divide* this light and darkness.

208. As light and shade *invade* each other's bounds.

V. Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
 As to be hated needs but to be seen;
 Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace: 220
 But where the extreme of vice was ne'er agreed.
 Ask where's the north? at York, 'tis on the Tweed;
 In Scotland, at the Orcades; and there,
 At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.
 No creature owns it in the first degree, 225
 But thinks his neighbor farther gone than he;
 Even those who dwell beneath its very zone,
 Or never feel the rage, or never own;
 What happier natures shrink at with affright
 The hard inhabitant contends is right. 230

Virtuous and vicious every man must be;
 Few in the extreme, but all in the degree:
 The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise;
 And even the best, by fits, what they despise.
 'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill; 235
 For, vice or virtue, self directs it still;
 Each individual seeks a several goal;
 But Heaven's great view is one, and that the whole.
 That counterworks each folly and caprice;
 That disappoints the effect of every vice; 240
 That, happy frailties to all ranks applied,
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,
 Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief:
 That virtue's ends from vanity can raise, 245
 Which seeks no interest, no reward but praise;
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,

218. *To be hated* is in the infinitive mode absolute.

241. *That applied* happy faculties, etc.

245-7. *That can raise and can build.*

247. **Build.**—Prefix "can" from 245.

The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.

Heaven, forming each on other to depend,

A master, or a servant, or a friend, 250

Bids each on other for assistance call,

Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.

Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally

The common interest, or endear the tie.

To these we owe true friendship, love sincere, 255

Each home-felt joy that life inherits here;

Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,

Those joys, those loves, those interests to resign:

Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,

To welcome death, and calmly pass away. 260

Whate'er the passion,—knowledge, fame, or pelf,—

Not one will change his neighbor with himself.

The learned is happy nature to explore,

The fool is happy that he knows no more;

The rich is happy in the plenty given, 265

The poor contents him with the care of Heaven.

See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing.

The sot a hero, lunatic a king;

The starving chemist in his golden views

Supremely blest, the poet in his muse. 270

See some strange comfort every state attend,

And pride bestowed on all, a common friend:

See some fit passion every age supply,

Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.

261. Let the passion be *that which* it may be; or *whatever* may be considered as an indefinite pronoun, in which sense it is often used.

267. It is a striking truth, that those people, whom we might suppose the most miserable, are apparently the most happy, and that, too, under mistaken views of their own character: which is in itself sufficient evidence that all ideas of happiness are illusory, unless founded on a rational reference to the concerns of another world.

269. The starving chemist—reference is here made to the alchemists who, for a long time, were employed in vain search after the philosopher's stone, which they fondly hoped would turn everything it touched into gold. See the poet in his muse *supremely blest*.

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law, 275
 Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw:
 Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
 A little louder, but as empty quite:
 Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
 And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age: 280
 Pleased with this bauble still, as that before;
 Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.
 Meanwhile opinion gilds, with varying rays,
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days;
 Each want of happiness by hope supplied, 285
 And each vacuity of sense by pride:
 These build as fast as knowledge can destroy;
 In Folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy;
 One prospect lost, another still we gain;
 And not a vanity is given in vain; 290
 Even mean self-love becomes, by force divine,
 The scale to measure others' wants by thine.
 See, and confess, one comfort still must rise;
 'Tis this, Though man's a fool, yet God is wise!

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE III.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO SOCIETY.

I. The whole universe one system of society, verse 7, etc. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, verse 27. The happiness of animals mutual, verse 49. II. Reason or instinct operate alike to the good of each individual, verse 79. III. Reason or instinct operates also to society in all animals, verse 109. How far society carried by instinct, verse 115. How much farther by reason, 131. IV. Of that which is called the state of nature, verse 144. Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of arts, verse 169; and in the forms of society, verse 179. V. Origin of political soci-

279. Scarfs, garters.—Badges of the orders of knighthood.

280. Beads, of the rosary.

291. 292. Even mean *self-love* becomes the *scale*. This, perhaps, the poet would consider as the sanction of our Saviour's golden rule. Our self-love leads us to desire good treatment from others, and may therefore influence us to practice the same unto them. *By thine*—*thine* is a pronoun, supplying the place of an object and pronoun, viz., *thy wants*,

eties, verse 199. Origin of monarchy, verse 207. VI. Patriarchal government, verse 215. Origin of true religion and government, from the same principle of love, verse 231, etc. Origin of superstition and tyranny, from the same principle of fear, verse 241, etc. The influence of self-love operating to the social and public good, verse 269. Restoration of true religion and government on their first principle, verse 283. Mixed government, verse 288. Various forms of each, and the true end of all, verse 303, etc.

EPISTLE III.

I. HERE then we rest: "The Universal Cause
Acts to one end, but acts by various laws."

In all the madness of superfluous health,
The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,
Let this great truth be present night and day: 5
But most be present, if we preach or pray.

Look round our world, behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.

See plastic Nature working to this end,
The single atoms each to other tend, 10
Attract, attracted to, the next in place
Formed and impelled its neighbor to embrace.

See matter next with various life endued,
Press to one center still, the general good.
See dying vegetables life sustain, 15
See life dissolving vegetate again:

All forms that perish other forms supply,
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die,)
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return. 20

2. **To one end.**—The good of the whole.

4. **Trim.**—Ornament.

5. Let this great truth, etc. What is this great *truth*? The sentence marked with a quotation answers.

9. **Plastic.**—Having power to give form.

10. See the single *atoms*, *each* tend toward the other. *Each*, or *every one*, is a distributive expression for a number taken singly, and in apposition with *atoms*.

11. See them attract—*attracted to* is a participle from the complex verb *to attract to*.

14. *Good*, in the end of the line, is in apposition with *center*.

Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
 One all-extending, all-preserving soul
 Connects each being, greatest with the least;
 Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;
 All served, all serving: nothing stands alone; 25
 The chain holds on; and where it ends unknown.

Has God, thou fool! worked solely for thy good,
 Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?
 Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
 For him as kindly spreads the flowery lawn: 30
 Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
 Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
 Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
 Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.
 The bounding steed you pompously bestride 35
 Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.
 Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain?
 The birds of Heaven shall vindicate their grain.
 Thine the full harvest of the golden year?
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer; 40
 The hog, that plows not, nor obeys thy call,
 Lives on the labors of this lord of all.

Know, Nature's children all divide her care;
 The fur that warms a monarch warmed a bear.
 While man exclaims, "See all things for my use!" 45
 "See man for mine!" replies a pampered goose:
 And just as short of reason he must fall,
 Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the powerful still the weak control;

23. **Greatest.**—Prefix "the."

27. Has God worked, etc. *Work* is here made a regular verb, which is seldom the case, except in the sea-phrase. "he *worked* his passage." So in some of Pope's other writings, we find *caught* instead of *caught*.

29, 30. *He who, etc., spreads*

34. **Loves of his own and raptures.**—Loves and raptures of his own.

40. Part pays—a part of the products of the year must be expended in support of the ox, by whose labors they were increased.

49. Grant man *to be*, etc.

Be man the wit and tyrant of the whole: 50
 Nature that tyrant checks; he only knows,
 And helps, another creature's wants and woes.
 Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,
 Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove?
 Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings? 55
 Or hears the hawk when *Philomela* sings?
 Man cares for all: to birds he gives his woods,
 To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods.
 For some his interest prompts him to provide,
 For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride: 60
 All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy
 The extensive blessing of his luxury.
 That very life his learned hunger craves,
 He saves from famine, from the savage saves;
 Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast, 65
 And, till he ends the being, makes it blest,
 Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,
 Than favored man by touch ethereal slain.
 The creature had his feast of life before;
 Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o'er! 70
 To each unthinking being, Heaven, a friend,
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end:
 To man imparts it; but with such a view
 As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too;
 The hour concealed, and so remote the fear, 75
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.

50. **Wit.**—Intellectual master.

53-6. The *falcon*, *jay*, and *hawk* regard not the colors, brilliancy, or musical powers of those creatures which they devour. They have but one object, which is, to satisfy hunger.

54. **Varying.**—That is, varying with her position and the different angles in which the reflected light strikes upon the eye.

56. **Philomela.**—The nightingale. *Philomela*, daughter of *Pandion*, King of Athens, is fabled to have been changed into a nightingale.

68. Several of the ancients, and many of the Orientals since, esteemed those who were struck by lightning as sacred persons, and the particular favorites of Heaven.—POPE.

73. **View.**—Vision, prospect,

Great standing miracle ! that Heaven assigned
Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

II. Whether with reason, or with instinct blest,
Know, all enjoy that power which suits them best: 80
To bliss alike by that direction tend,
And find the means proportioned to their end.
Say, where full instinct is the unerring guide,
What pope or council can they need beside ?
Reason, however able, cool at best, 85
Cares not for service, or but serves when pressed,
Stays till we call, and then not often near;
But honest instinct comes a volunteer,
Sure never to o'ershoot, but just to hit,
While still too wide or short is human wit; 90
Sure by quick nature happiness to gain,
Which heavier reason labors at in vain.
This too serves **always**, reason never long;
One must go right, the other may go wrong.
See, then, the acting and comparing powers, 95
One in their nature, which are two in ours;
And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,
In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis man.

Who taught the nations of the field and flood
To shun their poison, and to choose their food? 100
Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,
Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand ?

77. Exclamatory sentences, like this, seem to have an independent sense in the third person, as in the second, when an address is made.—Great standing miracle; that heaven did assign to its only thinking *thing* (or *man*) this turn of mind.

86. **Pressed**.—From *press*, originally to engage men by *prest* or earnest-money for the public service. from L. *præsto*, in readiness or in hand.

97. **Raise**.—Prefer to, exalt.

101. Who gave them foresight to withstand? *prescient* is an adjective agreeing with *them* understood.

102. The halcyon or kingfisher was reputed by the ancients "to build upon the wave." and the entrance to the floating nest was supposed to be contrived in a manner to admit the bird, and exclude the water of the sea.

Who made the spider parallels design,
 Sure as Demoivre, without rule or line?
 Who bid the stork, Columbus-like, explore 105
 Heavens not his own, and worlds unknown before?
 Who calls the council, states the certain day?
 Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

III. God, in the nature of each being, finds
 Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds: 110
 But, as He framed a whole the whole to bless,
 On mutual wants built mutual happiness:
 So, from the first, eternal order ran,
 And creature linked to creature man to man.
 Whate'er of life all-quickening ether keeps, 115
 Or breathes through air, or shoots beneath the deeps,
 Or pours profuse on earth, one nature feeds
 The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds,
 Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,
 Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120
 Each loves itself, but not itself alone,
 Each sex desires alike, till two are one.
 Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace:
 They love themselves, a third time, in their race.
 Thus beast and bird their common charge attend, 125
 The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend;
 The young dismissed to wander earth or air,
 There stops the instinct, and there ends the care:

104. **Demoivre.**—An eminent mathematician, born in France in 1667, but driven from his country by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, he settled in London, where he died in 1754. He was an intimate friend of Newton.

115-118. One nature feeds the vital flame, and swells the genial seeds of *everything* of life, which all quickening either *keeps* or *breathes*, or *shoots*, or *pours*, etc., the verbs being connected, in each case, by *or*. This construction may, however, be doubted, and we are inclined to adopt the following: Let *or* be taken for *either as* or *whether*, it will read thus—One nature feeds, etc., of *whatever*, etc., all quick'ning either keeps (or sustains) *either as* (or *whether*) *it breathes*, or *shoots*, or *pours* (i.e., *puts forth*) *profusely*, etc.

115. **Ether.**—The medium assumed in astronomy and physics as filling all space. It was believed by some of the Stoics to be the animating principle of all things.

The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
Another love succeeds, another race. 130

A longer care man's helpless kind demands;
That longer care contracts more lasting bands:
Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,
At once extend the interest and the love;
With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn. 135

Each virtue in each passion takes its turn;
And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,
That graft benevolence on charities.

Still as one brood, and as another rose,
These natural love maintained, habitual those: 140

The last, scarce ripened into perfect man,
Saw helpless him from whom their life began:

Memory and forecast just returns engage,
That pointed back to youth, this on to age;
While pleasure, gratitude, and hope combined, 145

Still spread the interest, and preserved the kind.

IV. Nor think in Nature's state they blindly trod;

The state of Nature was the reign of God:
Self-love and social at her birth began,
Union the bond of all things, and of man. 150

Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
Man walked with beast joint-tenant of the shade;

The same his table, and the same his bed;
No murder clothed him, and no murder fed.

In the same temple, the resounding wood, 155
All vocal beings hymned their equal God:

130. Another love succeeds, another race *succeeds*.

134. **Interest.**—Advantage.

135. **Fix.**—Become constant.

138. **Charities.**—The natural affections, love.

142. Saw him helpless from whom their life began.

144. *That*—memory. *This* (forecast) *points*, etc.

149. That is, Self-love and social love began at Nature's birth.

151. Nor were arts, to aid that pride.

152. *Joint tenant* is in apposition with man.

155. *Wood* is in apposition with temple.

The shrine with gore unstained, with gold undrest,
 Unbribed, unbloody, stood the blameless priest:
 Heaven's attribute was universal care,
 And man's prerogative to rule, but spare. 163

Ah! how unlike the man of times to come!
 Of half that live the butcher and the tomb;
 Who, foe to Nature, hears the general groan,
 Murders their species, and betrays his own.
 But just disease to luxury succeeds, 165
 And every death its own avenger breeds;
 The fury-passions from that blood began,
 And turned on man a fiercer savage, man.

See him from Nature rising slow to art!
 To copy instinct then was reason's part; 170
 Thus, then, to man the voice of Nature spake—
 "Go, from the creatures thy instructions take:
 Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
 Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;
 Thy arts of building from the bee receive; 175
 Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave;
 Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
 Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.
 Here, too, all forms of social union find,

157. The shrine *was*, etc. *Unstained* and *undrest* are participial adjectives, having lost their original nature of pure participles by being joined with the privative *un*. The privative always works this chance, when it makes the part with which it is joined, imply, that the state or act, which the part taken by itself, would express, never existed, or was never done. Thus, *un-drest* here means, that it never had been *drest*, etc. *Undrest*, when derived from the verb to undress, *to divest of clothes*, is a participle.

160. *To rule* supplies a nominative after *was* understood, and *spare* is connected with it.

161. Ah! how unlike *was he* to the *man* of times to come. *Butcher* and *tomb* connected are in apposition with *man*. *Man* kills and devours for food, half that live.

167. The *fury*-passions—*fury* is a substantive used as an adjective.

168. *Man*, in the end of the line, is in apposition with *savage*.

Fiercer.—The positive here is not supplied.

173. It is a caution commonly practiced amongst navigators, when thrown upon a desert coast, and in want of refreshments, to observe what fruits have been touched by the birds, and to venture on these without further hesitation.

177. The idea of the nautilus sailing is now rejected.

And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind: 180
 Here subterranean works and cities see;
 There towns aerial on the waving tree.
 Learn each small people's genius, policies,
 The ants' republic, and the realm of bees:
 How those in common all their wealth bestow, 185
 And anarchy without confusion know;
 And these forever, though a monarch reign,
 Their separate cells and properties maintain.
 Mark what unvaried laws preserve each state,
 Laws wise as Nature, and as fixed as fate. 190
 In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,
 Entangle Justice in her net of law,
 And right, too rigid, harden into wrong;
 Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.
 Yet go! and thus o'er all the creatures sway, 195
 Thus let the wiser make the rest obey;
 And, for those arts mere instinct could afford,
 Be crowned as monarchs, or as gods adored."

V. Great Nature spoke; observant man obeyed;
 Cities were built, societies were made: 200
 Here rose one little state; another near
 Grew by like means, and joined through love or fear.
 Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,
 And there the streams in purer rills descend?
 What war could ravish, commerce could bestow; 205
 And he returned a friend, who came a foe.
 Converse and love mankind might strongly draw,
 When love was liberty, and Nature law.
 Thus states were formed: the name of king unknown,
 Till common interest placed the sway in one. 210

192. *In vain* entangle justice, etc.

193. And *harden right, made too rigid*, into wrong.

198. Monarchs—See note to ver. 87, Epis. I.

'Twas virtue only (or in arts or arms,
 Diffusing blessings, or averting harms),
 The same which in a sire the sons obeyed,
 A prince the father of a people made. 214

VI. Till then, by Nature crowned, each patriarch sat,
 King, priest, and parent of his growing state;
 On him, their second Providence, they hung,
 Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.
 He from the wondering furrow called the food,
 Taught to command the fire, control the flood, 220
 Draw forth the monsters of the abyss profound,
 Or fetch the aerial eagle to the ground;
 Till, drooping, sickening, dying, they began
 Whom they revered as god to mourn as man:
 Then, looking up from sire to sire, explored 225
 One great first Father, and that first adored;
 Or plain tradition, that this all begun,
 Conveyed unbroken faith from sire to son;
 The worker from the work distinct was known,
 And simple reason never sought but one. 230
 Ere wit oblique had broke that steady light,
 Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right;
 To virtue, in the paths of pleasure trod,
 And owned a father when he owned a God,
 Love all the faith and all the allegiance then, 235
 For Nature knew no right divine in men,
 No ill could fear in God; and understood
 A sovereign being but a sovereign good.

211-214.

'Twas virtue only—

The same *virtue*, which in a sire the sons obey'd.*That* made a prince the father of a people.

217. Providence is in apposition with him.

219—222. He taught to *command*, to *control*, to *draw*, or *fetch*.223-224. Till they began to mourn *him*, drooping, sick'ning, dying, as man, *whom* they revered as God. *Him* is the antecedent of *whom*. With regard to *man* and *God*, see note to line 87, Epistle I.

223. The participles apply to the patriarch.

227. This *All*, i.e., this universal frame of nature.230. Simple reason never sought but one *God* or *worker*.

231. The allusion is to the refraction of light in passing through the oblique sides of the glass prism.

236. The *divine right* of kings, which, at certain periods, has been so strongly urged, has no foundation in nature

True faith, true policy, united ran,
 That was but love of God, and this of man. 240
 Who first taught souls enslaved and realms undone,
 The enormous faith of many made for one;
 That proud exception to all Nature's laws,
 T' invert the world, and counterwork its cause?
 Force first made conquest, and that conquest, law; 245
 Till superstition taught the tyrant awe,
 Then shared the tyranny, then lent it aid,
 And gods of conquerors, slaves of subjects made.
 She, midst the lightning's blaze and thunder's sound,
 When rocked the mountains, and when groaned the ground,
 She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray, 251
 To power unseen, and mightier far than they:
 She, from the rending earth and bursting skies,
 Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise:
 Here fixed the dreadful, there the blest abodes; 255
 Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods;
 Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
 Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust;
 Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
 And, formed like tyrants, tyrants would believe. 260
 Zeal then, not charity, became the guide;
 And hell was built on spite, and heaven on pride.
 Then sacred seemed th' ethereal vault no more;
 Altars grew marble then, and reeked with gore:
 Then first the Flamen tasted living food; 265

242. *Many made for one* is a substantive phrase governed by the preposition *of*.

Enormous.—Out of all rule.

244. **Cause.**—Object of its existence.

249. **She.**—Superstition.

259. Such *gods* as—*As* is a relative pronoun when it follows the indefinite pronoun *such*, agreeing with its antecedent; or, when its antecedent has an adjective qualified by the adverb *so* agreeing with it.

264-268. Altars grew *marble*, i.e., became the scenes of cruelty. *Marble* may be considered as an adjective agreeing with altars. Next *he* smeared his grim idol, etc. And played the God, i.e., made the popular idea *that he could wield, or stay the judgments* of God, an engine against his foe. Engine is in apposition with God.

265. **Flamen.**—Among the Romans, a priest devoted to the service of a particular god, and so called from the fillet which he wore round his head. The word is the same as the Latin *filamen*, from *filum*, a fillet of wool.

Next his grim idol smeared with human blood;
 With Heaven's own thunders shook the world below,
 And played the god an engine on his foe.

So drives self-love, through just, and through unjust,
 To one man's power, ambition, lucre, lust: 270

The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.

For what one likes, if others like as well,

What serves one will, when many wills rebel?

How shall he keep what, sleeping or awake, 275

A weaker may surprise, a stronger take?

His safety must his liberty restrain:

All join to guard what each desires to gain.

Forced into virtue thus, by self-defense,

Even kings learned justice and benevolence: 280

Self-love forsook the path it first pursued,

And found the private in the public good.

'Twas then the studious head or generous mind,

Follower of God, or friend of human-kind,

Poet or patriot, rose but to restore 285

The faith and moral Nature gave before;

Relumed her ancient light, not kindled new;

If not God's image, yet His shadow drew;

Taught power's due use to people and to kings;

Taught nor to slack, nor strain its tender strings, 290

The less, or greater, set so justly true,

That touching one must strike the other too;

Till jarring interests of themselves create

The according music of a well-mixed state.

272. Government and laws, connected, are in apposition with the antecedent part of *what*.

285-291. *Rose, relumed, drew, taught, and set* are all connected, having the same nominative continued, viz., *head*, etc.

287. **Relume.**—To light anew, to rekindle, from L. *re*, again, *lumen*, light.

292. *Touching one* is an imperfect phrase, or part of a sentence, and is the subject of the verb *must strike*.

294. The deduction and application of the foregoing principles, with the use or abuse of civil and ecclesiastical policy, was intended for the subject of the third book.—POPE

Such is the world's great harmony, that springs 295
 From order, union, full consent of things;
 Where small and great, where weak and mighty made
 To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade;
 More powerful each as needful to the rest,
 And, in proportion as it blesses, blest; 300
 Draw to one point, and to one center bring
 Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.
 For forms of government let fools contest;
 Whate'er is best administered is best:
 For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight; 305
 His can't be wrong whose life is in the right:
 In faith and hope the world will disagree,
 But all mankind's concern is charity:
 All must be false that thwart this one great end;
 And all of God, that bless mankind, or mend. 310
 Man, like the generous vine, supported lives;
 The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.
 On their own axis as the planets run,
 Yet make at once their circle round the sun,
 So two consistent motions act the soul, 315
 And one regards itself, and one the whole.
 Thus God and Nature linked the general frame,
 And bade self-love and social be the same.

296. **Consent.**—In this use obsolete.

297-301 (*Being*) made to serve, etc. Each (*being made*) more powerful, and (*each being*), blest, etc. Were small and great, etc. Draw, etc.

298. "Where the small and weak are made to serve, not suffer," "the great and mighty to strengthen, not invade."

306. His *mode of faith* can't be wrong, etc.

309, 310. All *modes of faith* must be false, etc. And all modes *must be of* God, etc.

314. **At once.**—At one and the same time.

ARGUMENT OF EPISTLE IV.

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO HAPPINESS.

I. False notions of happiness, philosophical and popular, answered from verses 19 to 26. II. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all, verse 29. God intends happiness to be equal; and, to be so, it must be social, since all particular happiness depends on general, and since he governs by general, not particular laws, verse 35. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of society, that external goods should be unequal, happiness is not made to consist in these, verse 49. But notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of happiness among mankind is kept even by Providence, by the two passions of hope and fear, verse 67. III. What the happiness of individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world; and that the good man has here the advantage, verse 77. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of nature or of fortune, verse 93. IV. The folly of expecting that God should alter His general laws in favor of particulars, verse 121. V. That we are not judges who are good; but that whoever they are, they must be happiest, verse 131, etc. VI. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of virtue, verse 167. That even these can make no man happy without virtue: instanced in riches, verse 185; honors, verse 193; nobility, verse 205; greatness, verse 217; fame, verse 237; superior talents, verse 259, etc., with pictures of human infelicity in men possessed of them all, verse 269, etc. VII. That virtue only constitutes a happiness whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal, verse 309. That the perfection of virtue and happiness consists in a conformity to the order of Providence here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter, verse 327, etc.

EPISTLE IV.

O HAPPINESS! our being's end and aim!

Good, pleasure, ease, content! whate'er thy name:

That something still which prompts the eternal sigh,

For which we bear to live, or dare to die;

Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,

O'erlooked, seen double by the fool and wise:

Plant of celestial seed! if dropped below,

Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?

Fair opening to some court's propitious shine,

Or deep with diamonds in the flaming mine?

5

10

1, 2. *End and aim* connected, *good*, etc., are in apposition with happiness. *Whatever*—see note to line 26, Epistle II.

6. *O'erlooked* is a perfect participle, agreeing with happiness. *O'erlooked* by those who are simple enough to seek it in anything but virtue; *seen double* by those who admit anything else to have a share in procuring it.

9. *Growest* the opening fair, etc.—or *growest* those in the fair opening.

Shine.—Splendor, brightness, not common as a noun.

Twined with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,
Or reaped in iron harvests of the field?

Where grows? where grows it not? If vain our toil,
We ought to blame the culture, not the soil:

Fixed to no spot is happiness sincere,

15

'Tis nowhere to be found, or everywhere:

'Tis never to be bought, but always free;

And, fled from monarchs, St. John! dwells with thee.

I. Ask of the learned the way! the learned are blind;

This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind;

20

Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,

Those call it pleasure, and contentment these;

Some, sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain;

Some, swelled to gods, confess e'en virtue vain;

Or, indolent, to each extreme they fall,

25

To trust in everything, or doubt of all.

Who thus define it, say they more or less

Than this, that happiness is happiness?

II. Take Nature's path, and mad Opinion's leave;

All states can reach it, and all heads conceive;

30

Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell;

There needs but thinking right, and meaning well;

And mourn our various portions as we please,

Equal is common sense, and common ease.

11. **Parnassian.**—Relating to Parnassus, a mountain in Greece, sacred to Apollo and the Muses.

12. The allusion is to military fame.

15. **Sincere.**—Clean, pure, the original meaning.

21. **Action.**—Epicureans.—POPE.

They were the followers of Epicurus, a Greek philosopher, who taught that pleasure was the chief good. Pope does not give their real character, nor that of the Stoics.

Ease.—Stoics.—POPE. See note 101 on Epistle II.

23. Epicureans.—POPE.

24. Stoics.—POPE.

25. *Indolent* is an adjective agreeing with *they*.

26. Sceptics.—POPE.

27, 28. Do they, who thus define it, say more or less than to *say* this, etc., in which case, *to say* would follow *than* in the infinitive, which it does in place of a noun, and sometimes, of the indicative or potential mode.

29. Take nature's path and leave mad opinion's *path*.

32. There *is needed* only *thinking right* and *meaning well*. Here the active form of the verb is used for the passive, and the substantive phrase is the nominative case.

33. Mourn—see note to line 49. Epistle I.

Remember, man, "the Universal Cause
Acts not by partial, but by general laws,"
And makes what happiness we justly call,
Subsist, not in the good of one, but all.

There's not a blessing individuals find,
But some way leans and hearkens to the kind; 40

No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
No caverned hermit rests self-satisfied:

Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,
Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend.

Abstract what others feel, what others think, 45
All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink:

Each has his share; and who would more obtain,
Shall find the pleasure pays not half the pain.

Order is Heaven's first law; and, this confest,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest, 50

More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.

Heaven to mankind impartial we confess,
If all are equal in their happiness:

But mutual wants this happiness increase; 55
All Nature's difference keeps all Nature's peace.

Condition, circumstance is not the thing;
Bliss is the same in subject or in king,

In who obtain defense, or who defend,
In him who is, or him who finds a friend: 60

Heaven breathes through every member of the whole
One common blessing, as one common soul.

37. And makes *that*, which we call *happiness*, to subsist, etc.

43. *They*, who most pretend to shun, or hate, mankind, *seek*, etc.

45. Abstract—see note to ver. 49. Epistle I.

49. And *this confest*. *This* is in the nominative case absolute with *confest*, or (*being*) *confest*.

51. But *he*, who infers *from hence*, that such are happier, shocks, etc. *Hence* is an adjective put after *from*, as a substantive in the objective case, or *from hence* is an adverbial phrase.

57. **Condition**.—Rank.

59. In (*those*) who obtain defense, etc.

62. As (*it breathes*) one common soul.

But Fortune's gifts if each alike possessed,
 And each were equal, must not all contest ?
 If then to all men happiness was meant, 65
 God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
 And these be happy called, unhappy those;
 But Heaven's just balance equal will appear.
 While those are placed in hope, and these in fear: 70
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
 But future views of better, or of worse.

O sons of earth ! attempt ye still to rise,
 By mountains piled on mountains, to the skies ?
 Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys, 75
 And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

III. Know, all the good that individuals find,
 Or God and Nature meant to mere mankind,
 Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
 Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence. 80

But health consists with temperance alone;
 And peace ! O virtue ; peace is all thy own.
 The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain;
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.

Say, in pursuit of profit or delight, 85
 Who risk the most, that take wrong means or right ?
 Of vice or virtue, whether blessed or cursed,
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first ?
 Count all the advantage prosperous vice attains,
 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains: 90

68. These may be called happy, those *may be called* unhappy.

71, 72. Present *good* or *ill* is not the *joy* or *curse*.

But our future *views*, etc., are the *joy* or *curse*.

74. Referring to the Titans or giants of mythology, who, in their war against the gods, attempted to scale the heavens by piling mountain upon mountain.

78. **Mere mankind.**—Man in his present condition.

80. *Lie* agrees with *pleasure* and *joys*, in the line preceding ; or rather with *good*, in the 77th line, with which *pleasures* and *joys* are in apposition.

84. **Worse.**—By worse means obtain them.

86. Do *they* risk most, *that* take wrong means, or *they that* take right means.

90. 'Tis only *that* (advantage) from *which*, etc.

And grant the bad what happiness they would,
One they must want, which is to pass for good.

Oh! blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe!

Who sees and follows that great scheme the best, 95

Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.

But fools the good alone unhappy call,

For ills or accidents that chance to all.

See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just!

See godlike Turenne prostrate on the dust! 100

See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife!

Was this their virtue, or contempt of life?

Say, was it virtue, more though Heaven ne'er gave,

Lamented Digby! sunk thee to the grave?

Tell me, if virtue made the son expire, 105

Why, full of days and honor, lives the sire?

Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,

When Nature sickened, and each gale was death?

Or why so long (in life if long can be)

Lent Heaven a parent to the poor and me? 110

What makes all physical or moral ill?

There deviates Nature, and here wanders will.

God sends not ill, if rightly understood,

91. Grant—see note to line 49, Epistle I.

92. One *happiness* they must want (i.e., *must be destitute of*) which is *to pass for good*.

94. **Bliss to vice.**—Bliss granted to vice.

99. See *Falkland* dies—Lord Viscount Falkland was Secretary of State to Charles I., and was killed in the battle of Newbury, September 20, 1643. He fell in the thirty-fourth year of his age.

100. **Henry de la Tour**, Viscount of *Turenne*, a famous general, was born at Sedan, 1611, and was Marshal of France in 1644. He was most careful of those under his command; but justly reproached by Voltaire for his cruel devastations of the countries through which he marched.

101. **Sidney.**—Sir Philip Sidney, who died of a wound received at the battle of Zutphen, September 22, 1586. The anecdote of his generosity to the dying soldier is well known.

104. **Digby.**—The Hon. Robert Digby, who died April 19, 1726. He was a friend of Pope, who wrote his epitaph.

106. **The sire.**—William, fifth Lord Digby, died December, 1752. The Epistle was published in 1734.

107. **Henry-Francis-Xavier De Bunsunce**, denominated "the good Bishop of Marseilles," distinguished himself by his fortitude and charity, during the dreadful plague which afflicted that city in 1720 and 1721.

110. Pope's mother lived to the age of 91. She died in 1733.

Or partial ill is universal good,
 Or change admits, or Nature lets it fall — 115
 Short, and but rare, till man improved it all,
 We just as wisely might of Heaven complain
 That righteous Abel was destroyed by Cain,
 As that the virtuous son is ill at ease
 When his lewd father gave the dire disease. 120
 Think we, like some weak prince, the Eternal Cause
 Prone for His favorites to reverse His laws ?
 — IV. Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,
 Forget to thunder, and recall her fires ?
 On air or sea new motions be impressed, 125
 O blameless Bethel ! to relieve thy breast ?
 When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
 Shall gravitation cease if you go by ?
 Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
 For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall ? 130
 V. But still this world, so fitted for the knave,
 Contents us not. A better shall we have ?
 A kingdom of the just then let it be:
 But first consider how those just agree.
 The good must merit God's peculiar care; 135
 But who, but God, can tell us who they are ?
 One thinks on Calvin Heaven's own spirit fell;
 Another deems him instrument of hell;
 If Calvin feel Heaven's blessing or its rod,
 This cries there is, and that, there is no God. 140

115, 116. Or change admits *it* (i.e., *ill*), or nature, in its course, lets it happen, short and but rare, i.e. in a small degree, and but rarely, etc.

121, 122. Do we think the Eternal Cause prone, like some weak prince, to reverse his laws for his favorites?

123. There is an evident mixing up here of the story of the philosopher Empedocles, who is said to have thrown himself into one of the craters of Ætna, with that of the naturalist Pliny, who lost his life during an eruption of Vesuvius, A.D. 79.

126. A Yorkshire country gentleman, who suffered from asthma.

128. *You*, not Bethel, but Bolingbroke, to whom the Epistle is addressed.

130. **Chartres**.—"A man infamous for all manner of vices, who acquired an immense fortune by a constant attention to the vices, wants, and follies of mankind. He died in 1731." POPE, *Note to Moral Essays*, iii. 20.

137. **Calvin**, one of the most eminent of the Church reformers, was born at Noyon, in Picardy, in 1509, and died at Geneva in 1564.

What shocks one part will edify the rest,
 Nor with one system can they all be blest.
 The very best will variously incline,
 And what rewards your virtue, punish mine.
Whatever is, is right. This world, 'tis true, 145
 Was made for Cæsar, but for Titus too:
 And which more blest? who chained his country, say,
 Or he whose virtue sighed to lose a day?

VI. "But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed."
 What then? Is the reward of virtue bread? 150
 That vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
 The knave deserves it when he tills the soil
 The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,
 Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.
 The good man may be weak, be indolent; 155
 Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.
 But grant him riches, your demand is o'er.

"No: shall the good want health, the good want power?"
 Add health, and power, and every earthly thing:
 "Why bounded power? why private? why no king?" 160
 Nay, why external for internal given?
 Why is not man a god, and earth a heaven?"
 Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive
 God gives enough, while He has more to give:
 Immense the power, immense were the demand; 165
 Say, at what part of Nature will they stand?

What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,
 The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,
 Is virtue's prize. A better would you fix?
 Then give humility a coach and six, 170

146. The allusion is to Addison's tragedy of Cato, Act v. sc. 1:

"This world was made for Cæsar;"

and Act iv. sc. 4: "Justice gives way to force: the conquered world
 Is Cæsar's; Cato has no business in it."

148. The Roman Emperor Titus, having remembered one evening that he had bestowed no gift during the day, exclaimed, "My friends, I have lost a day."

160. *Why no king?* Why is the good man not a king?

163. *They* who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive, etc.

165. If the power *were* immense, the demand *would be* immense.

Justice a conqueror's sword, or truth a gown,
 Or public spirit its great cure, a crown.
 Weak, foolish man ! will Heaven reward us there,
 With the same trash mad mortals wish for here ?
 The boy and man an individual makes, 175
 Yet sighest thou now for apples and for cakes ?
 Go, like the Indian, in another life
 Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife,
 As well as dream such trifles are assigned,
 As toys and empires, for a godlike mind: 180
 Rewards, that either would to virtue bring
 No joy, or be destructive of the thing:
 How oft, by these, at sixty are undone
 The virtues of a saint at twenty-one !
 To whom can riches give repute or trust, 185
 Content or pleasure, but the good and just ?
 Judges and senates have been bought for gold,
 Esteem and love were never to be sold.
 O fool ! to think God hates the worthy mind,
 The lover and the love of human kind, 190
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.
~~Honor and shame from no condition rise;~~
~~Act well your part: there all the honor lies.~~
 Fortune in men has some small difference made: 195
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade;
 The cobbler aproned, and the parson gowned,

171. **Gown.**—An academic gown, or it may mean a Lord Chancellor's gown.

172. This may refer to William III., or, as stated by Elwin, to George II., who when he became king abandoned the opposition (who were Pope's friends) which he had patronized when Prince of Wales.

177. See Epistle I., 99.

178-180. Expect thy dog, etc., as well as dream *Dream* may be put in the infinitive mode, after *as well as*, allowing *expect* to be in the imperative—or, using it in the potential, *dream* may be connected with it in the same mode. As toys and empires *are—as* is a relative pronoun in the nominative case after *are*.

181. *These are* rewards.

189. *To think* is in the infinitive absolute.

190. **Love.**—The beloved, the object of love.

192 Because he [*possesses not*] a thousand pounds a year.

196. *Flaunts, flutters.*—It has been suggested that these words might with more propriety have changed places.

The friar hooded, and the monarch crowned.

“What differ more,” you cry, “than crown and cowl?”

I'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool. 200

You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,

Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,

Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;

The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with strings, 205

That may'st by kings, or mistresses of kings:

Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,

In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece:

But by your fathers' worth if yours you rate,

Count me those only who were good and great. 210

Go! if your ancient but ignoble blood

Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood,

Go! and pretend your family is young,

Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.

What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards? 215

Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on greatness: say where greatness lies.

“Where but among the heroes and the wise!”

Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,

From Macedonia's madman to the Swede. 220

The whole strange purpose of their lives to find,

201-203 You'll find it, etc., *that* worth makes, etc.

204. **Prunella.**—A strong woolen stuff, generally black, and probably so called from its prune color. The clergyman's gown was made of it.

205-208. That thou *mayest be stuck o'er* with titles and *hung round* with strings, by kings, etc.; in quiet *flow*, etc. *Flow* is here a noun. It may be further observed concerning the expressions, *stuck o'er* and *hung round*, that when a preposition or any participle is annexed to a verb, in order to carry out the sense, they may be considered as forming a *complex verb*. *Lucrece* was the seat of a very ancient and honorable family in France, and is here introduced to signify *nobility* of long standing.

205. **Strings.**—The cord or ribbon of the orders of knighthood; in French, *cordons*.

206. *That*, in apposition to the previous line.

208. From Boileau's *Satire V*.

216. Not all the blood of all the Howards *can ennoble* them.

220. Alexander the Great and Charles XII. of Sweden. The former was no madman. The epithet is more applicable to the latter.

221. The whole strange purpose of their lives, *is* to find an *enemy*, or to make an *enemy* of all mankind.

Or make, an enemy of all mankind !

Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,

Yet ne'er looks forward farther than his nose.

No less alike the politic and wise;

225

All sly slow things, with circumspective eyes:

Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,

Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.

But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat

'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great:

230

Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,

Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.

Who noble ends by noble means obtains,

Or, failing, smiles in exile or in chains,

— Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed

235

— Like Socrates: that man is great indeed !

What's fame? A fancied life in others' breath,

A thing beyond us, even before our death.

Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown

The same, my lord, if Tully's, or your own.

240

All that we feel of it begins and ends

In the small circle of our foes or friends;

To all beside as much an empty shade

225. *Alike.* Compare *much the same*, verse 219.

226. *All are sly*, slow things, etc.

228. *Not because* themselves are wise, but *because* others are weak.

230. *Great.* Mark the pronunciation.

232. *He, who wickedly is wise*, etc., *is*, etc.

235. **Aurelius.**—Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Roman emperor, A.D. 161-180. He was the flower of the Stoical philosophy, and became after his death almost an object of worship.

Bleed is improperly used in reference to the death of Socrates, the celebrated Greek philosopher (born 469 B.C.), who died of poison.

240. **My lord.**—Bolingbroke.

Tully.—Marcus Tullius Cicero, the greatest orator of Rome, 106-43 B.C.

243-246. To all beside their *foes* and *friends*, a Eugene living is as much an empty shade, as a Cæsar dead *is*. When Julius Cæsar had marched his army to the banks of the river Rubicon, which the Romans had always considered as "the sacred boundary of their domestic empire," a struggle arose between his patriotism and his ambition, and he said to one of his generals, "If I pass this river, what miseries shall I bring upon my country! and if I now stop short, I am undone." Here his ambition triumphed, and plunging into the river, he sought the dominion of the world.

244. **Eugene.**—Prince Eugene of Savoy, who gained great military fame in the wars of the Spanish succession. He died in 1736, two years *after* the Epistle was published.

A Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead;
 Alike, or when or where they shone or shine, 245
 Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
 A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
 An honest man's the noblest work of God.
 Fame but from death a villain's name can save,
 As justice tears his body from the grave; 250
 When what to oblivion better were resigned,
 Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
 All fame is foreign, but of true desert,
 Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart:
 One self-approving hour whole years outweighs 255
 Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas;
 And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
 Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.
 In parts superior what advantage lies?
 Tell, for you can, what is it to be wise? 260
 'Tis but to know how little can be known;
 To see all others' faults, and feel our own;
 Condemned in business or in arts to drudge,
 Without a second, or without a judge:
 Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land? 265
 All fear, none aid you, and few understand.

247. Two explanations of this line may be quoted: (1) The wise, such as Shakespeare, Bacon, and Newton, are compared to feathers, which are flimsy and showy; and the heroes, who are the scourges of mankind, are compared to rods. (2) The feather alludes to the pen with which the wit writes, and the rod to the baton which was the symbol of the authority of the general.

248. **Honest.**—Full of honor, honorable, upright.

251. When *that* which would be better resigned to oblivion, is hung on high, etc.

252. An allusion to the disinterment and hanging on a gibbet of the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton, on January 30, 1661.

256. Of stupid *starers*.—This is a trope, by which the *actor* is put for the *act*.

Huzzas.—Mark the pronunciation then in use.

257. **Marcellus.**—One of the most prominent of the party of Pompey opposed to Cæsar. After the battle of Pharsalus, 48 B.C., in which Pompey was signally defeated, he retired to Mitylene. He was afterwards pardoned by Cæsar, but was assassinated on his journey to Rome.

262, 263. 'Tis but to see.—'Tis but to be condemned. All *would* fear, none *would* aid you, etc.

Painful pre-eminence ! yourself to view
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring, then, these blessings to a strict account.

Make fair deductions: see to what they 'mount: 270

How much of other each is sure to cost;

How each for other oft is wholly lost;

How inconsistent greater goods with these;

How sometimes life is risked, and always ease.

Think, and, if still the things thy envy call, 275

Say, would'st thou be the man to whom they fall?

To sigh for ribbons if thou art so silly,

Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.

Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life ?

Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife. 280

If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,

The wisest, brightest, meanest, of mankind:

Or, ravished with the whistling of a name,

See Cromwell damned to everlasting fame !

If all, united, thy ambition call, 285

From ancient story learn to scorn them all.

There, in the rich, the honored, famed, and great;

See the false scale of happiness complete !

In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,

How happy those to ruin, these betray ! 290

Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,

From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose;

267, 268. *To view yourself above life's weakness and its comforts too*, is a painful pre-eminence.

275. If thou art so silly as *to sigh* for ribbons.

Call.—Call forth.

278. No real characters may be intended.

279. The yellow dirt (i. e., gold or wealth) the passion of thy life.

280. Some say the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough are meant, others Mr. Wortley Montagu and Lady Mary Montagu.

—282. **Bacon** (1561-1626)—The greatest of England's prose writers. He pleaded guilty to certain abuses and charges of receiving bribes during his capacity of Lord Chancellor of England, for which he was sentenced to pay an enormous fine, and to be imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure.

283. Or, *if thou art* ravished with the whistling of a name

286. **Ancient story.**—History.

289, 290. How happy are those, *to ruin* who lay in the hearts of kings, and how happy are these *to betray*, who lay in the arms of queens.

In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
 And all that raised the hero sunk the man:
 Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold, 295
 But stained with blood, or ill-exchanged for gold:
 Then see them broke with toils or sunk in ease,
 Or infamous for plundered provinces.
 O wealth ill-fated ! which no act of fame
 E'er taught to shine, or sanctified from shame ! 300
 What greater bliss attends their close of life ?
 Some greedy minion, or imperious wife
 The trophied arches, storied halls invade,
 And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.
 Alas ! not dazzled with their noontide ray, 305
Compute the morn and evening to the day;
 The whole amount of that enormous fame,
 A tale that blends their glory with their shame !
 Know, then, this truth, enough for man to know,
 ✓ "Virtue alone is happiness below." 310
 The only point where human bliss stands still,
 And tastes the good without the fall to ill;
 Where only merit constant pay receives,
 Is blest in what it takes and what it gives;
 The joy unequalled, if its end it gain, 315
 And if it lose, attended with no pain:
 Without satiety, though e'er so blest,
 And but more relished as the more distressed:
 The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,
 Less pleasing far than Virtue's very tears: 320
 Good, from each object, from each place acquired,
 Forever exercised, yet never tired;

294. Alluding to the Duke of Marlborough.

303. **Storied.**—Painted with historical subjects.

305. 306. View them not only in the blaze of their power, and the height of their prosperity, but look at the labors undergone and the crimes committed in obtaining their superiority; and also at the miseries that are sure to follow.

307. 308. The whole amount of that enormous fame is a tale that blends, etc.

311. It is the only point, etc.

314. *Where only merit* is blest, etc.

Never elated, while one man's oppressed;
 Never dejected, while another's blest;
 And where no wants, no wishes can remain, 325
 Since but to wish more virtue is to gain.

See the sole bliss Heaven could on all bestow!
 Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know;
 Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
 The bad must miss, the good, untaught will find; 330
 Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
 But looks through nature up to nature's God;
Pursues that chain which links the immense design,
Joins heaven and earth, and mortal and divine;
 Sees that no being any bliss can know, 335
 But touches some above and some below;
 Learns from this union of the rising whole,
 The first, last purpose of the human soul;
 And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
 All end,—in love of God and love of man. 340

For him alone, hope leads from goal to goal,
 And opens still, and opens on his soul;
 Till lengthened on to faith, and unconfined,
 It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.
 He sees why Nature plants in man alone, 345
 Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown:
 (Nature, whose dictates to no other kind
 Are given in vain, but what they seek they find;)
 Wise is her present: she connects in this

325. And where no wants *are*, no wishes can remain.

326. *To wish more virtue* is the subject of the verb *is*, and to gain supplies a nominative after it.

328. Which *he* who but feels *can taste*, which *he* who but thinks *can know*.

331. *He* is a slave to no sect, who takes no private road.

333, 334. Who pursues *that chain which* links the immense design—which joins, etc.

336. *Except a bliss* which touches some *things* (or *perhaps beings*) above and *some* below.

337. *He* is a slave to no sect, who learns, etc.

347. *Nature* is in apposition with *nature* in the 345th line.

349. Wise is her present, i.e., *her gift*.

His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss; 350
 At once his own bright prospect to be blest,
 And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love, thus pushed to social, to divine,
 Gives thee to make thy neighbor's blessing thine.
 Is this too little for the boundless heart? 355

Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
 Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
 In one close system of benevolence:
 Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
 And height of bliss but height of charity. 360

God loves from whole to parts: but human soul
 Must rise from individual to the whole.
 Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,

As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
 The center moved, a circle straight succeeds, 365
 Another still, and still another spreads;

Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace;
 His country next; and next all human race;
 Wide and more wide, the o'erflowings of the mind

Take every creature in, of every kind; 370
 Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
 And Heaven beholds its image in his breast.

Come, then, my friend! my genius! come along,
 O master of the poet and the song!
 And, while the muse now stoops or now ascends, 375
 To man's low passions or their glorious ends,

351. *It* (i.e., her present, referring to *hope* and *faith*) is his own bright prospect to be blest. *To be blest* here supplies the place of the gerundial, or substantive phrase, *of being blest*.

359. Be thou happier as thou *art* kinder, or thou wilt be happier as thou *art* kinder, in whatever degree. *Whate'er* is an indefinite pronoun agreeing with degree.

365. The center *being* moved, etc.

368. It will embrace his country next, etc.

369, 370. The overflowings of the mind *take in* every creature, etc.

375, 376. We frequently meet with instances in Pope and also in other writers, where two or more verbs and prepositions are used, having an alternate relation: thus, And while the muse now *stoops to* man's low passions, or *ascends to* their glorious ends.

Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
 To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
 Formed by thy converse, happily to steer
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe: 380
 Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
 Intent to reason, or polite to please.
 Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
 Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
 Say, shall my little bark attendant sail, 385
 Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?
 When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
 Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
 Shall then this verse to future age pretend
 Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend? 390
 That, urged by thee, I turned the tuneful art
 From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
 For Wit's false mirror held up Nature's light;
 1 Showed erring pride, whatever is, is right;
 2 That reason, passion, answer one great aim;
 3 That true self-love and social are the same;
 4 That virtue only makes our bliss below;
 And all our knowledge is, ourselves to know.

377, 378. Teach me. like thee (who art), wise in various nature, *to fall*.

379. Perhaps it may be proper here to change the mood from the imperative used in the preceding lines to the *potential*. May I be formed by thy converse, etc.

381, 382. May I be correct with spirit—may I be eloquent with ease—may I be intent to reason or polite to please.

389. **Pretend.**—To stretch out before one, Latin *pre*, before, *tendo*, to stretch.

390. *That thou wert*, etc.

393, 394. That *instead* of wit's false mirror, I held up nature's light. That I show'd *to* erring pride, that whatever is, is right.

394. **Whatever is, is right.**—This sentence occurs three times in these Epistles, viz., in the last line of Epistle I., and in the 145th and 394th of Epistle IV. A misunderstanding of the author's plan, and the general scope of his reasoning, has not unfrequently caused his supposed sentiments to be severely reprobated, and himself to be harshly censured for scattering error in the way of those who, by a lack of experience, might eagerly embrace it for truth. If this were spoken of man, in reference to his Maker, it would most assuredly deserve all the reprobation which the good and virtuous could bestow upon it; but a little attention to the plan of the work will show that it is to be applied altogether to the dealings of God with man. After staking out his ground, in the first section of the first Epistle, he avows it as his sole object, "To vindicate the ways of God to man."

398. That to *know ourselves* is all our knowledge.





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